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Connecticut State Appropriations Committee
300 Capital Avenue Hartford, CT 06106

Testimony - Re: consolidation of the Legislative Commissions
March 10, 2013

Greetings members of the Appropriations Committee, I am Derrick McBride, a Commissioner for the African-American Affairs Commission (AAAC). I have served on the Commission since 2001.

As you are aware, the biennial budget presented by Governor Malloy on February 6th, recommends the consolidation of the Legislative Commissions into the Commission for Citizen Advocacy and the elimination of the Commission on Aging. This new Commission would also address discrimination against the LGBT community. I believe that this recommendation and the budget implications would be a disservice to the priorities and well being of the African-American community. For fifteen years the AAAC has provided the General Assembly and the Executive Branch with an important link to the African-American community. The AAAC has addressed the educational, health, economic, civil rights and political well being of the African-American community. The AAAC should be kept as a single entity to serve and advocate on behalf of the African American community. I believe the consolidation being proposed by Governor Malloy would adversely affect accomplishing the goals and mission of the AAAC.

Despite having half of the staff eliminated less than three years ago, the AAAC has continued to provide positive improvements on the quality of life of African-Americans and residents of the State. The Commission has help reduce the educational achievement gap by making it possible for several thousand of first generation and low-income students to gain access to higher education and financial aid. The AAAC has help identify health disparities and provide policy makers with cogent recommendations to improve the quality of life for all residents. The AAAC has led the battle to amend the Penn Act and prohibit racial profiling in traffic stops. The estimated savings through consolidation is less than .0003% of the biennial budget. Each of the affected Commissions has leveraged several millions of dollars to the state from federal and foundation sources annually (the AAAC was pivotal in securing \$1.2M federal dollars for racial profiling prohibition). These and other future accomplishments will be in jeopardy if the AAAC is forced into consolidated with the Asian Pacific American Affairs, the Commission on Children, the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission and the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

As a Commissioner and resident of Connecticut, I implore the Appropriations Committee to weigh the value of the Commission in serving the African American Community. The Commission is a viable and respected presence throughout the State. It is the Commission's desire to serve the residents of Connecticut to the best of its ability. Respectfully, this can best be done as the African- American Affairs Commission performing as duly appointed and created to do in 1997.

I appreciate your consideration and your acceptance of my testimony.

Commissioner Derrick T. McBride
State of Connecticut African American Affairs Commission